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In Praise of Philadelphia Used Bookshops

by Jack Walsdorf (Blackwell North America, Inc.)

As many of us head to Philadelphia to ALA Midwinter, it is pretty exciting that Jack has taken the time and expertise to help us find some of the best bookshops near the ALA exhibit area! He has even arranged special hours for ATG readers! Will wonders never cease. See you in Philadelphia. — KS

The book is not dead. Ask any acquisitions librarian, and you will quickly be told that books abound and budgets do not keep pace. If it is true that the book is not dead, it is doubly true that



David J. Holmes Autographs

On a recent trip to the east coast I spent a full day book hunting and information gathering. My first stop was the shop of **David Holmes**, located on the corner of South Broad Street and Locust Street, on the third floor of a bank building. David Holmes, the owner and manager, has twenty-two years of bookselling experience. He first worked in Boston in antiquarian bookshops and has spent the last eleven years as an owner of a bookshop in Philadelphia. His shop is neat, tidy, and looks like a personal library. The stock is small (500—1,000 books plus autographed letters and manuscripts) with a specialty of English and American literature of the 18th to 20th century. He issues three to four catalogues a year and runs a small publishing house as well. All of his publications relate to bookselling, book collecting or literary themes; his latest book is by the English rare book dealer, **George Sims**, entitled *A Life in Catalogues*. It is limited to 650 copies and priced at \$25.00.

Shop Information: David J. Holmes Autographs, 230 South Broad Street, Third Floor. Hours: Monday - Friday 10:00 am—5:00 pm. He will be open on Saturday, February 4th especially for librarians coming to ALA. Telephone: (215) 735-1083, Fax: (215) 732-8151. Note: Saturday visitors may have to use the security phone at the Locust Street entrance and call for admittance.

William H. Allen

Located a short ten minute walk west of David Holmes are the adjoining shops of **Catherine Barnes** and **William H. Allen**. Allen's has been in business since 1918, and at their present location on Walnut street for thirty years. This is the shop you

the used book is more alive than ever. Here in Portland, Oregon, the cold weather and long rainy season (a good six months of drip and drizzle) make some fifty-five used bookshops a necessity. A recent phone call to a dealer in Milwaukee, Wisconsin brought forth his guess that the city had opened "about a half-dozen new used bookshops in the last two years."

Forget all those clichés you have heard about Philadelphia — all that cream cheese, Rocky, hoagies, Norman Rockwell and Independence Hall stuff — Philly is also a city of books and publishing. A quick check of the 1994 Yellow Pages gives forth a list of some 34 shops — and that's only counting those directly in the city. Another 10 to 15 shops are in the surrounding area. The city also excels in publishers, being the home of W.B. Saunders, J.B. Lippincott, Chilton, Temple, the University of Pennsylvania Press, F.A. Davis, Taylor & Francis and others.

Librarians/book collectors visiting Philadelphia in February for ALA, will find a number of interesting and well run shops, oftentimes in easy walking distance from the downtown convention area. Space does not permit a review of more than a handful, but hopefully you will be lead to one or two shops which will please you and suit your bibliophilic interests.

would dream of owning — 30,000 well chosen volumes, generally well organized, in a good location, offering three to five catalogues per year on such subjects as American History, English and American Literature, and Latin and Greek Classics. The shop is full to the brim with reasonably priced books, including some nice Press Books and a good selection of history and literature. But perhaps the best and rarest part of this shop (besides the wonderful George Allen himself, son of the founder and an experienced bookman of some fifty-five years standing) is the old style library card catalogue that fills perhaps one-sixth of the front shop. This is used both as a file for customers' wants cards (much of Allen's business is done by mail); and as an actual index of the books owned by the shop.

Shop information: William H. Allen, 2031 Walnut Street. Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00 am—5:00 pm; Saturdays, 8:00 am.—1:00 pm. Telephone (215) 563-3398, Fax # (215) 567-3279.

Catherine Barnes, Autographs & Signed Books

On the third floor of what was once a private residence, in the same building which houses the Allen Bookshop, can be found the shop of Catherine Barnes; dealer in autographs and signed books. Founded in 1985 by this Ph.D. in History who considered teaching, then rare book librarianship before choosing to become a dealer, the shop's specialty is U.S. and European historical documents, plus items of a scientific or medical interest. While little will be found here for those interested in modern literature, those looking for signed books and/or autographs of presidents, military leaders, royalty and scientific figures will have happy hunting. Letters of the likes of Einstein and Eisenhower range in price from \$1,350—\$2,850. But more modest finds are here as well; a signed Christmas card of Duke

Ellington for \$350 and a signed photograph of Lady Bird Johnson for \$150. In total, Catherine Barnes estimates that she has between 900—1,000 items in stock. She issues two catalogues each year.

Shop Information: *Catherine Barnes, Autographs & Signed Books, 2031 Walnut Street, Third Floor. Hours: Monday—Friday 9:00 am—4:00 pm. Telephone: (215) 854-0175, Fax: (215) 854-0831. Note: she will be open on Saturday, February 4 during ALA to give librarians added time to browse.*

City Book Shop

Along with shops like Allen's, with its seventy-five plus years of experience, Philadelphia also has some good newer "used" bookshops. One such is **City Book Shop**, run by **Leonard Gontarek** and located on Pine Street in the heart of Antique Row. Opened only three years ago, City Book Shop advertises itself as having: "Good Used Books Bought and Sold, Gifts for the Reader and Writer with Coffee & Croissants." Owner Gontarek has some 10,000 O.P. books located on the main floor and in a small, pleasant basement room. In the twelve years he has been involved with selling books, Gontarek has developed specialties in philosophy and literature. He does carry a good, but small, selection of Modern Firsts, along with some signed editions. For those librarians in Philadelphia on Friday night, City Book Shop offers readings by local poets and /or novelists.

Shop Information: *City Book Shop, 1127 Pine Street. Hours: Tuesdays—Thursdays 12:00 pm—8:00 pm. Fridays 12:00 pm—9:00 pm. Saturdays 11:00 am—7:00 pm. Sundays 12:00 pm—6:00 pm. Telephone (215) 592-1992.*

Whodunit?

Lovers of mysteries, spy stories and adventure books will want to make the short eight-block trip from the Convention Center area to a shop called **Whodunit?** which prides itself on having "one of the world's largest selections of out of print" books on these subjects. Co-owned by the mystery writer **Art Bourgeau**, (author of **Mystery Lovers Companion** and **Wolfman**) and his wife, **Patricia J. MacDonald**, (author of **Mother's Day** and the soon to be published **Secret Admirer**), this well stocked (20,000 plus O.P. volume) shop was started seventeen years ago by Tennessean Bourgeau because "when I moved to Philadelphia I couldn't find a store in town that had what I wanted to read, so I started one." You will find this shop very well-organized, if a trifle overstocked, and you will find books in very good condition. They also publish six catalogues per year.

Shop Information: *Whodunit? 1931 Chestnut Street. Hours: Monday—Saturday, 11:00 am.—6:30 pm. (Owner Art Bourgeau is usually at the shop on Monday and Thursday). Telephone: (215) 567-1478.*

Bauman Rare Books

If Leonard Gontarek is an example of the new breed of young bookseller probably starting off bookselling on a shoestring, then Bauman Rare Books on Locust Street is an example of the

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Publisher's Profile

Column Editor: **Matt Nauman** (Blackwell North America)



Howard University Press

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Vital Statistics:

Number of employees: 10 Estimated number of books to be published in 1995: 14 In print titles: 114

The **Howard University Press** was formally established in 1972, following a decision by President James E. Cheek and the Trustees of the University, becoming the first and only university press operated by a historically black university in the United States.

Its commitment to the University's historic mission involves publishing that contributes to solutions for the human and social problems in the United States and throughout the world. Supporting Howard's mission, the Press gives priority to publishing books and periodicals that serve to increase the general knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the contributions and interests of African Americans and people of color throughout the world. The Press' titles range from world politics, religion, women's studies, Caribbean and Latin American studies, education, literature, drama, art history and other fields.

In addition to publishing books, the Press also publishes three journals — **Journal of Communications**, **The Journal of Negro Education**, and the **Journal of Religious Thought**. Howard University Press also sponsors a book publishing institute to educate and encourage minorities to enter the world of book publishing. ☞

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high-end carriage trade, which started on a shoestring and has been most successful. Their Yellow Pages ad states: "Rare Books, Autographs, Prints & Maps . . . Highest Prices Paid for Quality Books & Autographs . . . Visit our New York Gallery: The Waldorf Astoria Hotel Park Avenue." Enough said. This is the shop which holds the books most of us can only dream of owning. They do 8—10 catalogues per year with a recent catalogue offering such gems as **Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own**, \$2,000 (signed first edition in which she proclaims "A Woman must have money and a room of her own is she is to write fiction."); **Eudora Welty's The Golden Apples**, \$850, signed first edition; **Thoreau's The Writings**, \$12,500, in a finely bound limited manuscript edition and even an extraordinarily rare first edition of **Spenser's The Faerie Queene** for \$25,000. They offer individualized lists and have a large stock of more modestly priced offerings as well. Bauman's has been open in Philadelphia for fifteen years and they offer better books in American History, American English and European Literature, signed and inscribed books, children's books and autographs and documents.

Shop Information: *Bauman Rare Books, 1215 Locust Street. Hours: 9:00 am—5:00 pm. Monday—Friday. Telephone: (215) 546-6466, Fax: (215) 546-9064.*

The Book Trader

In my visits to Philadelphia, the single book shop I never miss is **The Book Trader**, located on South Street, just one block from the Society Hill district and an easy \$4 to \$5 cab ride from most city center hotels. Founded in 1975, this shop has a lot going for it. First and foremost is the size of the stock, estimated to be around 110,000 titles. Lighting is good, stock is clean and reasonably priced and the hours are probably the best of any shop: open daily and open to midnight! The last of a dying breed, this shop has no computer, no fax machine and no catalogues — just lots of books. Readers of mysteries, general literature, science fiction, books about books and bibliographies will be especially pleased with **The Book Trader**. But the shop's strong point is the large general stock which will offer books to please almost any collector's taste. They also sell records and CD's and their own line of post cards.

Shop Information: *The Book Trader, 501 South Street. Hours: Daily, 10:00 am—midnight. Telephone: (215) 925-0219.*

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On Your Bookshelf — What Are We Reading?

By Joanne Schmidt (Emerson College Library)

Books recently read by library staff, booksellers and publishers. Titles to be included in future columns can be sent to Joanne Schmidt at the Emerson College Library; 148 Beacon Street; Boston, MA 02116, or, via Internet to "ecl_jms@flo.org".

The private bookcases of the Emerson College Library staff are filled with books for holiday reading. Paul Twist, the most voracious reader I know, divides his shelves into two categories: fiction and non-fiction. By the time you read this he'll probably have finished these non-fiction titles: *Winchell: Gossip, Power, & the Culture of Celebrity* by Neal Gabler (Knopf, 1994) and *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s* by Karal A. Marling (Harvard University Press, 1994). The new compilation of Pauline Kael's film reviews is also on his reading list. Paul's list of "good new fiction" includes: *The City Below* by James Carroll (Houghton Mifflin, 1994); *Bird Artist* by Howard Norman (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1994); *In the Lake of the Woods* by Tim O'Brien (Houghton Mifflin, 1994); *Open Secrets* by Alice Munro (Knopf, 1994).

Liz Bezera is enjoying Lauren Bacall's *Now* (Knopf, 1994) "a nice continuation of her autobiography" and Barbara Kingsolver's *The Bean Trees* (Penguin Library, 1989). Liz also recommends *Colored People: A Memoir* by

Henry Louis Gates (Knopf, 1994).

Mickey Zemon, Emerson's Library Director, may be able to read some of these during semester break: *Sunday's Child* by Ingmar Bergman (Arcade, 1994); *Train Go Sorry: Inside a School for the Deaf* (Houghton-Mifflin, 1994); *Joseph Papp* by Helen Epstein (Little, Brown, 1994); *The Shipping News* by E. Annie Proulx (Wheeler, 1994); *Novemberfest* by Theodore Weesner (Knopf, 1994); *The Language Instinct* by Steven Pinker (Morrow, 1994); *Please Stand By: The Prehistory of Television* by Michael Ritchie (Overlook Press, 1994).

The staff of the Burlington Public Library, in Burlington, MA, always gives great advice when asked for recommendations. They haven't steered me wrong yet.

Debra Hinde referred me to *Bone People* by Keri Hulme (Louisiana State University Press, 1985). Debra is also currently reading: *Having Our Say: The Delaney Sisters' First 100 Years* by Sarah Louise and Annie Elizabeth Delaney (Kodansha International, 1993); *True North: A Memoir* by Jill Ker Conway (Knopf, 1994); and the medical thriller, *The Edge* by Mark Olshaker (Crown, 1994).

Cara Thissell, who works in the Children's Room, suggested *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* which was



written by Jon Scieszka and illustrated by Lane Smith (Viking Kestrel, 1989). The wolf's version of this classic tale is worth checking out. Cara, and many of her co-workers, are reading *The Primrose Way*, a young adult novel by Jackie French Koller (Gulliver Books, 1992).

Brita Flemming recently finished *Sanctuary* by Faye Kellerman (Morrow, 1994). It's one of the Peter Decker/Rina Lazarus mysteries. She liked it so much she's ready to read more fiction by Faye Kellerman and her husband, Jonathan Kellerman.

The Burlington Public Library staff also turned me on to Barbara Kingsolver. Like Liz, I'm a new fan. *Animal Dreams* (Harper and Row, 1990) and *Pigs in Heaven* (HarperCollins, 1993) are on my night stand. Also waiting for my holiday break when I hope to be able to read are: *Interview With the Vampire* by Anne Rice (Ballantine Books, 1977), *Disclosure* by Michael Crichton (Knopf, 1994) and *In the Name of the Father* by Gerry Conlon (Plume, 1993). I didn't get to read them when first published, but there's something about the way movies get advertised that makes me want to read these! ☺

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Hibberd's

I will end this all too brief review of some of the used bookshops of Philadelphia with a look at what was once the crowning glory of bookselling in the City of Brotherly Love — Sessler's. A March, 1974 article in *Publishers Weekly* titled "Philadelphia: A Thriving Book World All Its Own" called Sessler's a store "as well known for its services as it is for what

one bibliophile calls the top lady bookman in the country," Mabel Zahn." Sad to say, Sessler's is no more — but their old location on Walnut Street, just four blocks from the Convention Center, now houses Hibberd's Books. Their yellow page ad says, "Hibberd's Books — owners and staff formerly of Sessler's." Established in 1986, Hibberd's holds about 25,000 volumes, mostly used, rare and remainder books. They also carry a very small selection of new books. For the most part, Hibberd's specializes in the humanities, with a good size collection of books on literature and the arts.

Shop Information: Hibberd's Books, 1310 Walnut Street. Hours: 10:00 am — 6:00 pm Monday — Saturday. 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm Sunday. Telephone: (215) 546-8811. ☺